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Economic Research Aid

LABOR SUPPLY AND EMPLOYMENT IN NORTH KOREA
1949 AND 1953-62



CIA/RR A.ERA 63-1

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this research aid is to provide background information on labor supply and employment in North Korea for 1949 and 1953-62. New data from the North Korean Central Statistical Bureau make possible the revision and updating of CIA/RR RA 59-16, Labor Supply and Employment in North Korea, 1949 and 1953-58, November 1959, SECRET, but estimates still are subject to further revision when more complete information is received.

This research aid is the fourth published by this Office on labor supply and employment in the Communist Asian countries. The other two reports, in addition to CIA/RR RA 59-16, are CIA/RR RA 59-12, Labor Supply and Employment in Communist China, 1952-58, August 1959, SECRET; and CIA/RR A.ERA 62-2, Labor Supply and Employment in North Vietnam, 1955-61, July 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

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North Korea: Administrative Divisions, 1962 (UNCLASSIFIED)

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LABOR SUPPLY AND EMPLOYMENT IN NORTH KOREA*
1949 and 1953-62

I. Population and Labor Supply**

The total population of North Korea at midyear 1962 is estimated at 11.3 million persons. No official data on the age distribution of the population are available, but it is estimated that the population of working age at midyear 1962 was about 5.9 million persons (see Table 1***). Although the absolute number of people in the working age group increased during the period 1949 to 1962, it is believed that the proportion of this age group to the total population has not changed. Beginning in 1965, there will be a relative decline in the number of people entering the population of working age because of a drop in fertility and a rise in mortality in the population during the Korean War. This relative decline will aggravate further the shortage of labor in North Korea.

II. Employment†

A. Civilian Labor Force

The civilian labor force in North Korea in 1962 is estimated to have been about 4.4 million persons. A marked shift has occurred in the distribution of the civilian labor force between agricultural and nonagricultural employment as a result of the intensive efforts of the North Korean regime to expand industrial production. About

* The estimates and conclusions in this research aid represent the best judgment of this Office as of 15 January 1963.

** The term labor supply as used in this research aid refers to the population of working age 15 through 59 years.

*** Appendix A, p. 7, below.

† Data on employment contained in the tables exclude the unemployed and the armed forces. The North Korean government does not publish data on unemployment or on the strength of its armed forces. Estimates of the North Korean armed forces, however, indicate that they represent a relatively large proportion of total employment (civilian employment plus employment in the armed forces). The size of the armed forces (including internal security forces) at midyear 1962 is estimated at about 380,000 men, which is 8 percent of total employment. Maintenance of a large military force -- the third largest body of Communist armed forces in the world -- has aggravated the scarcity of civilian labor by diverting manpower away from industry and agriculture.

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73 percent of the civilian labor force was engaged in agricultural and about 27 percent in nonagricultural occupations in 1953, but by midyear 1962 the proportions had changed to about 50 percent each in agricultural and nonagricultural activities (see Table 2*). The agricultural labor force is estimated to have declined at an average annual rate of about 1 percent, from 2.4 million persons at midyear 1953 to 2.2 million persons at midyear 1962 (see Table 3**). The shift of farm labor into urban employment has caused a shortage of labor in the rural areas, which the regime has attempted to ease by increasing labor productivity through greater mechanization and use of chemical fertilizers. The nonagricultural labor force, which has expanded greatly since 1953, is estimated to have been 2.2 million persons in 1962. The size of the nonagricultural labor force in 1962 was 2.5 times that of 1953, equivalent to an average growth of more than 140,000 persons per year. A particularly large increase in non-agricultural employment occurred in the last half of 1958 with the start of the "flying horse" movement.*** The increase in the number of nonagricultural workers throughout the period 1953-62 was made possible by the growth of the urban population of working age, by increased participation in the labor force (particularly of women), and by drawing workers from agriculture. The regime reported, however, that a shortage of labor still existed in 1959 in the cities as well as in the rural areas. In an attempt to alleviate this labor shortage, the government has repatriated about 100,000 Koreans since 1959, including 77,000 from Japan. ¹/†

B. Workers and Employees

Throughout the countries of the Sino-Soviet Bloc the term workers and employees is used as an employment classification. The term as used in North Korea includes only persons in the state sector of the economy and excludes members of cooperatives, employees of private enterprises, and individual artisans. Although workers and employees in North Korea are engaged primarily in nonagricultural employment, employees of state (as opposed to cooperative) agriculture

* Appendix A, p. 8, below.

** Appendix A, p. 9, below.

*** The "flying horse" movement was the North Korean version of the "leap forward" campaign of Communist China in which the tempo of agricultural socialization and industrial production was greatly increased. The dislocations caused by poor planning in agriculture and industry soon became obvious to the North Korean regime, and the "flying horse" movement was abandoned in 1959. Although the damage was small compared with the Chinese case, the effects of some of the ill-conceived innovations lingered through 1960.

† For serially numbered source references, see Appendix C.

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also are included. About 97,000 workers and employees were engaged in state agriculture in 1960, or less than 7 percent of the total number of workers and employees.

The distribution of workers and employees is shown in Table 4*. The average number of workers and employees increased from 575,000 in 1953 to 1,458,000 in 1960, an average rate of growth of more than 14 percent per year. By the end of 1961 the number of workers and employees reportedly had increased to 1,610,000. 2/ The greatest absolute increase in employment in state-operated enterprises during the period 1953-60 occurred in industry, which absorbed approximately five out of eight persons added to nonagricultural occupations in the state sector. In 1960 the state industrial sector employed 699,000 persons, more than 51 percent of the workers and employees in nonagricultural activities. Industrial employment by type of ownership is shown in Table 5**. State industry employed about 86 percent of the industrial labor force in 1960, and the remainder was employed in handicraft producer and fishing co-operatives. Private industry in North Korea was completely eliminated by the end of 1958.

The distribution of workers and employees by sex is shown in Table 6***. The proportion of women in the nonagricultural labor force increased sharply in 1958 as a result of the regime's decision to replace male workers (particularly male officeworkers) with women wherever possible. At the end of 1960, women in state-operated enterprises constituted 33 percent of the labor force; the proportion of women workers in cooperative enterprises probably is somewhat higher. Before the Korean War, female labor was confined largely to agriculture and light industry, but today women also are employed in the chemical, mining, machine building and metallurgical industries and in construction.

The geographical distribution of workers and employees, as shown in Table 7[†] and on the map,^{††} indicates the general areas where employment is concentrated. The breakdown of the number of "specialists" (skilled workers other than engineers and technicians), by economic sector and by type of industry, as shown in Table 8,^{†††} reflects the regime's emphasis on developing such fields as the chemical, machine building, and metallurgical industries.

- * Appendix A, p. 10, below.
- ** Appendix A, p. 11, below.
- *** Appendix A, p. 11, below.
- † Appendix A, p. 12, below.
- †† Inside back cover.
- ††† Appendix A, p. 13, below.

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APPENDIX A

STATISTICAL TABLES

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Table 1

Estimated Population of North Korea, by Age Group a/
1949 and 1953-62

Million Persons											
Age Group	<u>1949</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>
Total	<u>9.56</u>	<u>8.44</u>	<u>8.63</u>	<u>8.95</u>	<u>9.31</u>	<u>9.63</u>	<u>9.93</u>	<u>10.25</u>	<u>10.60</u>	<u>10.96</u>	<u>11.31</u>
0 through 14 years	4.06	3.52	3.57	3.68	3.83	3.97	4.10	4.24	4.41	4.58	4.74
15 through 59 years	5.04	4.47	4.59	4.77	4.95	5.11	5.26	5.42	5.59	5.76	5.93
60 years and older	0.46	0.45	0.47	0.50	0.53	0.55	0.57	0.59	0.60	0.62	0.64

a. Midyear figures. For the methodology, see Appendix B.

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Table 2

Estimated Civilian Employment in North Korea a/
1949 and 1953-62

	Million Persons										
	<u>1949</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>
Total	<u>3.95</u>	<u>3.26</u>	<u>3.32</u>	<u>3.45</u>	<u>3.59</u>	<u>3.73</u>	<u>3.85</u>	<u>3.97</u>	<u>4.10</u>	<u>4.23</u>	<u>4.37</u>
Agricultural	3.01	2.39	2.33	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.27	2.23	2.22	2.22	2.22
Nonagricultural	0.94	0.87	0.99	1.15	1.29	1.43	1.58	1.74	1.88	2.01	2.15

a. Midyear figures. For the methodology, see Appendix B.

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Table 3

Estimated Agricultural Employment in North Korea, by Type of Farm Ownership a/
1949 and 1953-62

	Million Persons										
Type of Farm Ownership	<u>1949</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>
Total	<u>3.01</u>	<u>2.39</u>	<u>2.33</u>	<u>2.30</u>	<u>2.30</u>	<u>2.30</u>	<u>2.27</u>	<u>2.23</u>	<u>2.22</u>	<u>2.22</u>	<u>2.22</u>
Socialized	<u>0.02</u>	<u>0.08</u>	<u>0.70</u>	<u>1.07</u>	<u>1.78</u>	<u>2.10</u>	<u>2.17</u>	<u>2.23</u>	<u>2.22</u>	<u>2.22</u>	<u>2.22</u>
State <u>b/</u> Cooperative	0.02 0	0.06 0.02	0.04 0.66	0.05 1.02	0.05 1.73	0.05 2.05	0.06 2.11	0.09 2.14	0.10 2.12	0.10 2.12	0.11 2.11
Private	<u>2.99</u>	<u>2.31</u>	<u>1.63</u>	<u>1.23</u>	<u>0.52</u>	<u>0.20</u>	<u>0.10</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

a. Midyear figures except as noted. For the methodology, see Appendix B.

b. Annual average figures.

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Table 4

Estimated Average Number of Workers and Employees in North Korea, by Economic Sector a/
1949 and 1953-60

Thousand Persons								
<u>Economic Sector</u>	<u>1949</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1960</u>
Total	<u>565</u>	<u>575</u>	<u>690</u>	<u>763</u>	<u>808</u>	<u>844</u>	<u>983</u>	<u>1,458</u>
Production and distribution	<u>434</u>	<u>404</u>	<u>518</u>	<u>597</u>	<u>636</u>	<u>661</u>	<u>795</u>	<u>1,285</u>
Industry	245	165	216	262	294	323	409	699
Construction	82	91	132	150	132	124	145	168
Agriculture	17	57	45	50	54	51	56	97
Transportation } Communications }	65	49	56	59	55	61	64	72
Trade	25	13	13	13	13	13	14	15
Persons unaccounted for	25	17	27	32	36	38	48	81
	0	12	29	31	52	51	59	153
Services <u>b/</u>	<u>131</u>	<u>171</u>	<u>172</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>172</u>	<u>183</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>173</u>

a. For the methodology, see Appendix B.

b. Including government, educational, health, financial, and other services.

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Table 5

Estimated Employment in State and Cooperative Industry
in North Korea a/
1949 and 1953-60

	Thousand Persons									
	<u>1949</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	
Total	<u>275</u>	<u>198</u>	<u>248</u>	<u>297</u>	<u>341</u>	<u>394</u>	<u>519</u>	<u>775</u>	<u>811</u>	
State <u>b/</u>	245	165	216	262	294	323	409	649	699	
Cooperative <u>c/</u>	30	33	32	35	47	71	110	126	112	

a. For the methodology, see Appendix B.

b. Annual average figures.

c. Midyear figures.

Table 6

Estimated Number of Workers and Employees in North Korea, by Sex a/
1953 and 1956-60

<u>Year</u>	Total (Thousand Persons)	Men		Women	
		<u>Thousand Persons</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Thousand Persons</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
1953	628	463	73.8	165	26.2
1956	850	681	80.1	169	19.9
1957	880	706	80.2	174	19.8
1958	1,200	852	71.0	348	29.0
1959	1,459	949	65.1	510	34.9
1960	1,506	1,014	67.3	492	32.7

a. End-of-year figures. For the methodology, see Appendix B.

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Table 7

Geographical Distribution of Workers and Employees in North Korea a/
Selected Dates

	Thousand Persons			
	<u>1 October 1953</u>	<u>1 July 1956</u>	<u>1 June 1959</u>	<u>1 June 1960</u>
Total	<u>667</u>	<u>787</u>	<u>1,381</u>	<u>1,466</u>
P'yongyang City	58	121	226	246
P'yongan-Namdo	97	108	207	200
P'yongan-Pukto	123	95	148	163
Chagang-do	63	64	100	110
Hwanghae-Namdo	80	44	95	101
Hwanghae-Pukto		46	88	90
Kangwon-do	36	44	79	86
Hamgyong-Namdo	109	109	167	186
Hamgyong-Pukto	97	107	198	207
Yanggang-do	0	42	51	52
Kaesong City	4	7	22	25

a. For the methodology, see Appendix B.

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Table 8

Number of Specialists a/ in North Korea, by Economic Sector and Type of Industry
Selected Dates

	Persons			
<u>Economic Sector and Type of Industry</u>	<u>10 October 1953</u>	<u>20 September 1957</u>	<u>1 October 1959</u>	<u>15 November 1960</u>
Total	<u>8,359</u>	<u>27,414</u>	<u>46,388</u>	<u>67,872</u>
Industry <u>b/</u>	<u>3,902</u>	<u>15,133</u>	<u>25,385</u>	<u>36,744</u>
Including:				
Power	1,287	3,648	5,126	6,655
Mining	589	1,209	2,198	3,128
Geological survey	45	548	1,128	1,689
Metallurgical	293	1,240	2,253	2,972
Machine building	967	4,273	8,255	12,593
Chemical	233	2,682	3,968	5,468
Timber	109	506	725	1,102
Light industry	118	423	891	1,446
Fishing	261	604	841	1,691
Construction	<u>1,571</u>	<u>5,004</u>	<u>6,775</u>	<u>10,110</u>
Agriculture and forestry	<u>2,462</u>	<u>5,903</u>	<u>11,297</u>	<u>16,936</u>
Transportation	<u>424</u>	<u>1,374</u>	<u>2,931</u>	<u>4,082</u>

a. Specialists are defined as skilled workers other than engineers and technicians. For the methodology, see Appendix B.

b. The total for industry probably is not complete and represents only the total number of specialists in those industries listed.

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APPENDIX B

METHODOLOGY

I. Table 1: Estimated Population of North Korea, by Age Group, 1949 and 1953-62

Estimates of the population of North Korea for the period 1949 and 1953-62 were derived from official end-of-year population figures for 1949, 1953, 1956, 1959, and 1960. 3/ Midyear estimates of the total population and of the distribution of the population by age groups were prepared by the Foreign Demographic Analysis Division, US Bureau of the Census.

II. Table 2: Estimated Civilian Employment in North Korea, 1949 and 1953-62

The total labor force is estimated to be 80 percent of the population of working age (15 through 59 years). Civilian employment is equal to the total labor force minus employment in the armed forces. The data on the population of working age are from Table 1. The participation rate is estimated to be approximately the same as in Communist China, where the average participation rate during the First Five Year Plan (1953-57) was about 80 percent. Employment in the armed forces is from source 4/. Figures for agricultural employment are from Table 3, and nonagricultural employment is the residual of civilian employment minus agricultural employment.

III. Table 3: Estimated Agricultural Employment in North Korea, by Type of Farm Ownership, 1949 and 1953-62

Total employment is estimated on the basis of analogy with Communist China and from estimates and official data concerning the number of agricultural households in cooperatives, the percentage of agricultural households in cooperatives, the percentage of the population dependent on cooperative and private agriculture for a living, 5/ and the reported number of workers and employees in state agriculture. Socialized employment is the sum of employment in state and cooperative agriculture. Employment figures for state agriculture for 1949 and 1953-60 are from Table 4; figures for 1961 and 1962 are extrapolated at the average annual rate of increase of employment in state agriculture from 1953 through 1960. Employment in cooperative agriculture for 1949 and 1953-58 is derived from the reported number of cooperative agricultural households 6/ and an estimated average number of workers per household. Figures for 1959-62 are

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the residual of total employment minus employment in state and private agriculture. Private agricultural employment for 1949 and 1953-58 is the residual of total employment minus socialized employment. All private farmers reportedly were socialized by the end of 1958.

IV. Table 4: Estimated Average Number of Workers and Employees in North Korea, by Economic Sector, 1949 and 1953-60

Employment figures for 1949, 1953, 1956, 1959, and 1960 are from source 7/. Figures for the category "Persons Unaccounted For" for all years are derived as the residual of the reported employment in production and distribution minus the sum of employment in each economic sector such as industry and construction. Data for 1954-55 are derived from source 8/. Employment figures for 1957-58, except those for state agriculture, trade, and the category "Persons Unaccounted For," are derived from source 9/. The breakdown of the "transportation and communications" figure for 1957 and 1958 is interpolated from the reported breakdown of employment in transportation and communications for 1956 and 1959. Employment in state agriculture, trade, and the category "Persons Unaccounted For" in 1957-58 is the residual of employment in production and distribution minus employment in industry, construction, and transportation and communications. Estimates of the employment in state agriculture, trade, and the category "Persons Unaccounted For" are derived by allocating this residual among each of these categories in proportion to trends of their known distribution of employment between 1956 and 1959.

V. Table 5: Estimated Employment in State and Cooperative Industry in North Korea, 1949 and 1953-60

Total employment is the sum of employment in state and cooperative industry. Figures for state industry are from Table 4. Employment in cooperative industry is the sum of end-of-year employment in production and fishery cooperatives adjusted to midyear. Data on production cooperatives for 1949, 1953-58, and 1960 are from source 10/. The employment figure for 1959 is interpolated between the reported figures for 1958 and 1960. Data on fishery cooperatives for 1949, 1958, and 1959 are from source 11/; data for 1953-56 are derived from an official employment index 12/ on the assumption that the rate of increase for 1956-57 was the same as the average annual rate for 1953-56, and data for 1957 are derived from the officially announced figure for 1949 and the percentage increase for 1949-57. 13/ The figure for fishing cooperatives for 1960 is assumed to have remained at the level of 1959.

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VI. Table 6: Estimated Number of Workers and Employees in North Korea, by Sex, 1953 and 1956-60

Data on total employment and the number of women workers and employees for 1953, 1956, 1959, and 1960 are from source 14/; data for 1957-58 are derived from source 15/. In all years the number of men is the residual of total employment minus the number of women workers and employees.

VII. Table 7: Geographical Distribution of Workers and Employees in North Korea, Selected Dates

All data are from source 16/.

VIII. Table 8: Number of Specialists in North Korea, by Economic Sector and Type of Industry, Selected Dates

All data are from source 17/.

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APPENDIX C

SOURCE REFERENCES

Evaluations, following the classification entry and designated "Eval.," have the following significance:

<u>Source of Information</u>	<u>Information</u>
Doc. - Documentary	1 - Confirmed by other sources
A - Completely reliable	2 - Probably true
B - Usually reliable	3 - Possibly true
C - Fairly reliable	4 - Doubtful
D - Not usually reliable	5 - Probably false
E - Not reliable	6 - Cannot be judged
F - Cannot be judged	

"Documentary" refers to original documents of foreign governments and organizations; copies or translations of such documents by a staff officer; or information extracted from such documents by a staff officer, all of which may carry the field evaluation "Documentary."

Evaluations not otherwise designated are those appearing on the cited document; those designated "RR" are by the author of this research aid. No "RR" evaluation is given when the author agrees with the evaluation on the cited document.

Except for CIA finished intelligence, all sources are evaluated RR 2 unless otherwise indicated.

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2. Ibid., 24 Jan 62, p. GGG 16. OFF USE.
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